



AFAR REGION



Food Security UPDATE

Regional Disaster Prevention and Food
Security Bureau

Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative

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Summary and Implications

During the month, the general food security situation in Afar region was good. Livestock body condition improved as a result of better pasture and water availability resulted from the good rains received during the karmu. There are a number of concerns in the region. There is an outbreak of Acute Diarrhoea and Vomiting outbreak in Afdera and Gulina woreda of Zone 1 and Zone 4. The outbreak killed 23 people while 186 persons are affected. In Afdera, there are interventions being undertaken but in Gulina, there are no measures being undertaken since the woredas capacity to control is limited and health facilities are inadequate. Hence, immediate actions are expected from government, non-government organizations and UN Agencies to avoid further deaths. Drinking water shortage is becoming critical in some areas of the region. The problem is particularly serious in Erebt, Berhale, Dalol and Teru hence there is immediate need for water tankering and distribution in these areas as a short term solution. Incidents of camel disease were reported in six woredas of the region of which the death of 7 camels reported in three kebeles of the affected six kebeles in Telalek woredas. This was confirmed by experts from the Pastoral, Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau. In Amibara woreda, on the other hand, disease believed to be caused by internal parasites killed 80 cattle and still not controlled due to lack of appropriate drugs in the region. Expansion of tree locusts which have significant effect on livestock feed affecting browses (particularly for camels and goats) also observed in some areas of the region during the month of October. There is no action taken so far to control the tree locust outbreak which will gradually affect livestock production significantly to have serious implication on pastoralists' food security. Moreover, the overall effect the previous flood has resulted in from the damage on infrastructure, farm and grazing land in the affected areas will continue to be reflected on the food security of affected people to require assistance at least in the short run and rehabilitation works on the infrastructures damaged for sustained future.

Acute Diarrhoea and Vomiting is taking life in the region

Acute diarrhoea and vomiting (ADV) outbreak occurred starting the beginning of October causing the death of 10 people in Afdera woreda and 13 in Gulina woreda. In Afdera, 80 people were infected of which 14 admitted by health posts. Assessments were made on the outbreak by UNICEF, WHO, MSF and Region health bureau which consequently resulted in measures of control. The outbreak is almost under control in Afdera woreda but on the other hand, another outbreak was reported in Gulina woreda during the last week of October. As to the official information obtained from the woredas administration, 13 people died of the disease in the woreda of which 11 people died in Galikama kebeles and the remaining 2 people died in Gulina and Mulina-assaila one person in each kebele while 106 people in these three kebeles are still sick from the disease. According to the woreda administration sufficient controlling measures have not been taken so far as the incident is more than the woreda capacity. There are also some indications on the likelihood of the disease spreading to other kebeles of the woreda and adjacent areas..



The acute diarrhoea and vomiting outbreak, believed to be resulted from lack of clean drinking water, poor hygiene and sanitation problems in the area cause more losses of life and will transmit to the remaining kebeles in the

woreda and adjacent kebeles in other woredas unless immediate action taken by the regional government, non-government organizations, UN agencies and other concerned organizations. The woreda administration indicated that the outbreak is more than its capacity and called up on the support from all concerned parties to take immediate controlling measures.



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The weather condition is getting colder at the start of ‘*Gilal*’, cold wind season

With the upcoming of *Gilal*, which is considered to be a season of cold and dry wind, the weather condition is showing some changes. The daily weather is getting colder especially during night and down. Moreover, the volume of Awash River is decreasing with the ceasing of the rain fall, allowing drying of previously flooded areas. The upcoming of dry cold winds might have negative effect on crop production as it significantly affect crops at early stage when they can not resist the dry cold wind. This is highly probable in light of the delay for planting due to flood as most farm lands and the agro-pastorals in the region are found along Awash River. Moreover, the instant decline in the volume of the river significantly as currently being observed particularly in middle Awash Gewane area due to the diversion of the river in other upper stream woredas like Buremedaitu and Amibara out of its main canal is expected to hamper the production of crop by agro-pastorals. Very soon the water level of the river will be to low for crop production using the usual gravity canals for irrigation and to grow of enough feed for dry season for livestock along the river bank to the point where the diverted water returns back to its main course.

Improved Pasture and Water Availability in the region

The overall pasture and water availability have improved in the region following the good rains received in karma in most part of the region. This is also proved by the observed improvement on the body condition of livestock during the month. However, there are some specific areas in which the karma rain started late and poorly distributed. These includes Berehale, Dalol, Erebti woredas of zone 2 and Yallo and Teru woredas of zone 4 in which the pressure of pasture and water shortages starting to be felt. This is a case for concern particularly for Teru and yallo where there is large cattle herd and which is also usually used, despite the shortage, as wet grazing area for livestock migrating from lower awash basin during karma season. During the month, there was increase in the milk production in the region as livestock births were observed in most parts of the region.

Late onset of rainfall and its erratic distribution in Erebti, Berhale, Dalol and teru woredas during karma exacerbated the usual water shortage problem in these areas to a critical level. Rapid water shortage assessment was undertaken by a team composed of representatives from federal DPPA, regional DPFSB, Bureau of water resources and UNICEF from 15-26 October, 2006 on the extent of the problem in these areas. The assessment revealed that the problem started since August, 2006 when the UNICEF funded water distribution stopped and become sever gradually. The assessment team reported on the need to continue water tinkering and distribution by trucks immediately as a short term solution while constructing and maintaining of boreholes, shallow wells and assessing for potential water sources and constructing sustainable for the long term.

Tree Locusts are destroying browses in different areas of the region

Tree locust infestation are reported to be expanding in Dalifage and Telalek woredas of zone 5, elewuha and burka kebeles of Mille and Chifra woredas in zone 1, Erebti and to some extent Dalol woredas of zone 2 and in Ewa, Golina and Yallo woredas of zone 4. Rapid assessment was undertaken by a team comprising of experts from the Federal and Tigray and Afar Pastoral, Agriculture and Rural Development Bureaus. The team visited these areas except in Delifage and Telalek woredas of zone 5 from 11-20 October, 2006. As to the information obtained from the Pastoral, Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau, the locust is seriously destroying browses (acacia tree leafs) in these areas and expected to have significant implication particularly on camels and goats feed if measures are not taken on time. The areas affected by the locust are increasing now which may create difficulty to control the incident. The impact of tree locusts are usually felt significantly by pastoralists as their access food mainly depends on livestock production. There is no measure taken so far to control the tree locust out break. On the other hand, sorghum beetle(*pacnoda Interapta*) has reported to be infested highly in 8 kebeles in Argoba Woreda on 665ha of crop land and the woreda is in short of the required pesticide(*Sevine*). Moreover, tree locusts infested in the woreda since the beginning of October reported to expand to crop lands attacking 15 ha of crop land in Gacheni kebele.

s/n	Wereda	Studied area (Kebel)	Tree locust covered area	Number of tree locust per tree	Average No of tree per ha	Tree locust damage by %	Type of Tree spp damage
1	Ewa	Duba	350	150-180	180	50%	Geronto,Eunyuto,Ei eibto,hibli,kusa,ger are,Kontre
		karawan	200	200-180	230	60%	
		Bolatamo	1650	200-230	150	85%	
		Bolotamo Hida	650	100-150	150	50%	
2	Gulina	Kelewan	600	85-120	200	75%	
		Rokisa	850	100-130	280	50%	
3	Yallo	Wekri- Hidi	1300	120-150	270	60%	Geronto,Eudayto,H ibli Eieibto, Gerare and Merkaeuto
		Kukusa	450	120-150	270	74%	
		Bekaro	1000	75-100	320	85%	
		Dibina	600	150-180	320	75%	
44 44	Mille	kassagita	800	150-200	180	60%	
5	Chifra	Semsemna Hada	2250	180-220	200	65%	
		Weamona- Ander kilo	1200	250-300	320	70%	
		Fecha	750	150-200	200	50%	
		Chifra - Zuriya	1250	100-150	300	75%	
		Gerirona wekto	750	100-150	200	75%	
		Shekay - Boru	800	100-150	200	75%	

Source: Draft Report: Assessment Team.

Livestock Diseases reported in some areas of the region

Camel diseases incidents have been reported in some areas of the region during the month of October. Delifage, Telalek, Semu-robi woredas of zone 5, Elewuha kebele of Mille woredas in Zone 1, which is adjacent to affected areas in zone 5 and Dalol woredas of zone 2 are the areas reported to be affected by the disease. Experts from the Pastoral, Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau were deployed to Telalek woreda of zone 5 to asses the situation and to coordinate controlling measures from 10-20 October, 2006. As to the information obtained from the office, the assessment was done in three kebeles of six affected kebeles in the woreda and about 7camels died and unknown numbers of other camels (less than one year age) are infected with the disease, which affects respiratory organs. Currently a mobile team is trying to give treatment in the woreda. Moreover, experts from Kombolcha veterinary laboratory have taken samples for laboratory test and results are not confirmed yet. The situation in other woredas in which the disease reported to occur have not been assessed so far. On the other hand, information from the Agriculture and Livestock office indicates cattle disease caused by internal parasites occurred in Amibara woreda and the efforts made so far for the treatment have not been successful. More than 80 cattle died (which is only what an expert from the region personally observed in the field) and many more are still sick from the diseases. As to the experts in the region, the disease is not responding to the available drugs in the region and will continue to infect more cattle to threaten food security of pastoralists in the area, particularly in marshy areas which is enlarged due to water lodging resulted from the previous flood in the area. Thus it is important to give immediate response; make detail study on the reported disease and provide appropriate treatment before it is too late to protect the livelihood people in the affected area.

Flooded areas still require assistance

As reported in the month of September, 2006, a number of kebeles in Middle and Lower Awash basin have been affected by flood which displaced them or restricted the movement of households and their livestock and seriously undermined their access to food and cash income sources. An assessment on the impact of the flood undertaken in the affected areas by a joint mission from WFP, UNICEF, Save the children-UK, Regional DPFSB and the federal DPPA revealed that the victims are still in need of short term long term assistance. The assessment result provides information on areas affected and people affected in these areas and the impact of the flood on both farm and grazing land.

Table: Size of the affected population

Wereda	No. Of Ke-bels	Total popula-tion	Affected Population	Beneficiaries	Affected Land	
					Grazing land	Prepared & cultivat ed land
Assaita	5	24700	12000	0	16920	1280
Gewane	4	10294	6000	6000	105	0
Buremo-daytu	12	47000	10000	10000	4050	417
Amibara	4	13200	6000	6000	6300	683
Dulecha	2	4443	4000	4000	5930	275
Total	27	99637	48800	26000	33305	2655

Source: draft report on the impact flood (prepared by the assessment team Comprised of WFP, UNICEF, SC_UK, DPFSB and Federal DPPA)

The preliminary result from the assessment shows how important the prior information provided to the community in the affected areas and the coordinated effort made by the government and non-government organizations from regional to wore-das level to minimize casualties. It indicated that despite the insufficient food aid provided in some areas for only 15 days ration the preparation made by individual households and providing food resources from the safety net programme to emergency affected people highly minimized the effect which might have been highly disastrous. However, this does not mean that the affected areas are not in need of assistance any more. The damages caused by the flood on important infrastructures; road networks to the market, irrigation canals, dikes along the main course of awash river, health posts and more importantly on farm and grazing lands as indicated in the table above continue to have significant implication on livelihoods. Thus, immediate rehabilitation and maintenance works on the infrastructures and provision of food and non-food assistance for households seriously undermined their income and food and income sources is vital till they regain the capacity to return to their normal life.

Proposed Responses and Interventions

The region requires a number of urgent and immediate interventions to respond to the emerging problems. First, health and non health assistance is required to solve the Acute Diarrhoea and Vomiting in Gulina worda of Zone 4. The area requires clean water, medical supplies and medical personnel to solve the AWD crisis. Secondly, livestock in the region is under threat from unknown livestock diseases in certain parts of the region. Urgent livestock health programme such as livestock vaccination is required immediately. Since these diseases are unknown, there is need to carry out a region wide livestock health assessment. Water related problems are currently being addressed by UNICEF, Federal DPPA and DPFSB but further assistance in long term water development is required. Flood affected areas also require immediate and long term assistance.